

The bill would build on existing requirements for any chief of mission to submit to Congress all political contributions they or their family members made and update the certification presidents must submit to Congress to declare the nominee as qualified for the job. The new document must assert that any campaign donation played no role in the individual's selection. The senators said those provisions would ensure "competence, rather than contributions to political campaigns, is the primary qualification for the appointment."

The lawmakers are also looking to limit how long presidents can appoint sub-ambassadorial appointees to "cushy overseas assignments" without Senate approval. Individuals would only be able to serve in such special envoy-type positions for up to 90 days, and could only accept one such role per calendar year.

"As China and Russia expand their global footprints and professionalize their diplomatic corps, this bill would help ensure our career diplomats and political appointees remain highly skilled and empowered to confront the growing number of complex challenges around the globe," Kaine said.

Merkley noted that a "strong, experienced workforce" is essential to the functioning of all federal agencies.

"This bill ensures the State Department—the face of American diplomacy—will have the best possible foreign policy professionals working to protect our national security and interests overseas," Merkley said.

Tom Yazdgerdi, a Senior Foreign Service office and president of the American Foreign Service Association, threw his organization's support behind the bill.

"We appreciate Sen. Kaine's efforts with this legislation, which AFSA supports, to strengthen the career Foreign Service at very senior levels of the State Department," Yazdgerdi said.

"Professional diplomats, trained in diplomacy, and in the language and culture of the countries in which they serve, have proven that they are effective at carrying out U.S. foreign policy."

By Eric Katz

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<https://www.govexec.com/management/2024/06/state-departments-top-ranks-need-more-career-staff-senators-say/397206/>